



AMBS window

Stories of lives changed at AMBS

Sara Wenger Shenk, President

The AMBS learning community has been an oasis during this wilderness time in the wider church. One of our professors recently commented: "A student who has been in her own spiritual and social wilderness for some years told me yesterday that, in significant part because of her course work in Spirituality and Peacebuilding and our conversations, she is deciding to be baptized." If that's not a testimony to being a place of renewal and refreshment in the midst of wilderness, I'm not sure what is!

During graduation festivities, a student spoke to me about how she's found healing while at AMBS from wounds the church inflicted on her. She said she wasn't really a believer in Jesus when she came and now has become a follower of Jesus, full of joy. Members of this year's graduating class testified over and over to how the deep formational work they experienced at AMBS was life-changing for them. In expressing their thanks to the faculty, they often mentioned the welcoming community the faculty creates and the faculty's deep

love for the Bible and for Jesus. Without question, the spiritual maturity and humility of our faculty make AMBS a life-changing community.

Recognizing that we have students with many different perspectives, faculty members work hard to engage difficult questions in respectful ways. During spring semester, a professor sent this message: "Just to report that our discussion in Synoptics this morning was very fruitful. We were discussing the Transfiguration . . . All [the tense] issues came to the fore, and we had just about every opinion laid on the table at one point or another. There was goodwill; everyone was taken seriously by everyone. And we had a very good time and came to the interesting and important conclusion that Scripture is the stabilizing bar as we walk the tightrope of life."



One of our Canadian students recently told me about how restorative her time at AMBS has been. She spoke of the trepidation she had felt before coming, because of all the craziness people in Canada hear about politics in the States and about gun violence. "But I had this vision," she said, "of AMBS as a nest with a chicken brooding over it—that AMBS is one of the nests Jesus loves."

People experience God here, as another student told me emphatically. Thanks be to God! •

Top: The AMBS graduating class of 2016 prepared and shared a special ceremony during their commencement service. Shown: Annika Krause, Alyssa Mezsick and Gabe Pennington

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STAY IN TOUCH

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- ambs.edu/news-events

Eighteen graduates honored

The 2016 AMBS commencement service took place on May 21. Each of the eighteen graduates received one of the following degrees and certificates.

MDiv Master of Divinity

MAPS Master of Arts: Peace Studies

MACF Master of Arts in Christian Formation

MATS Master of Arts: Theological Studies

Certificate in Theological Studies

James Matthew Branum *Certificate in Theological Studies*. James will continue to serve with Joy Mennonite Church of Oklahoma City as minister of peace and justice, working with the Center for Conscience in Action. He will also continue to produce a monthly Mennonite Radio Show (mennoniteradio.org) that airs online as well as on international shortwave radio stations

broadcasting from the United States, Germany and Australia. He and his wife, Rebecca Faulkner Branum, have one son.

Alexandra Meriwether Brown *MATS*. Allie is a member of Plymouth Congregational Church of Christ in Fort Wayne, Ind. She and Matt Brown, her husband, have two daughters.

Katerina Marie Friesen *MDiv*. Katerina is exploring pastoral ministry possibilities and is gardening and writing in the meantime. She is a member of Fellowship of Hope in Elkhart.

Angela Kay Gamble *MDiv*. Angela attends Union Chapel Church of God in Bryan Ohio, where her spouse, Erik Lightner, is the pastor.

Thomas Kyle Hughes *MDiv*. Thomas will do a Clinical Pastoral Education internship. He is discerning ordination in

the Episcopal Church. He is a member of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Elkhart.

Joel David Ickes *MDiv*. Joel will be working with Global City Mission Initiative in the Bronx, New York. He currently teaches college classes in the social sciences and cross-cultural ministry. He is a member of Delta Community Christian Church in Lansing, Mich.

Elizabeth Annika Krause *MATS*. Annika is pursuing a campus ministry assignment. She is a member of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Charlene R. Mast *MACF*. Char will take two classes this fall to complete her degree. She plans to continue offering spiritual direction in the Goshen, Ind., community. She is a member of Walnut



James Branum, Alexandra Brown, Katerina Friesen, Angela Kay Gamble and Thomas Hughes. Not pictured: JoEllyn Chadwick



Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor emerita of theology and ethics, reads a blessing for Alexandra Brown (left) at the commissioning service, which takes place the evening before commencement. During the service, candidates for graduation as well as other students and their families who are leaving at the end of the academic year, receive words of encouragement and sending by someone the student selects from the AMBS community.



Joel Ickes (left), stands with his advisor, Jamie Pitts, assistant professor of Anabaptist studies. Jamie affirmed Joel's contributions as a student and blessed him for his new role at Global City Mission Initiative.



Joel Ickes, Annika Krause, Charlene Mast, Alyssa Mezsick and Gabe Pennington. Not pictured: Ben Schlegel

2016 GRADUATES

Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen. She is married to Randy Miller and has two daughters.

Alyssa Rachelle Mezsick *MDiv.*

Alyssa anticipates establishing a small diversified farm while working as a stay-at-home mom for the next several years. She and Steve, her husband, are expecting their second child this summer. She is a member of Summit Church in Niles, Mich.

Gabriel Ray Beliele Pennington *MDiv.*

Gabe will be associate pastor of Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Hydro, Okla. He is married to Christa Louise Pennington and is a member of Memorial Road Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmond, Okla.

Austin James Roberts *MAPS.* Austin will be training this summer in Montana and then serving two years in Rostrevor, Northern Ireland with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and Mennonite

Mission Network. He attends Hively Avenue Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Karl N. Stutzman *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Karl will serve as director of library services at AMBS. He is married to Twilla Epp-Stutzman; they have three children. He is a member of Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Laurel Denise Mast

Swartzendruber *MDiv.* Laurel is pursuing a healthcare chaplaincy position. She is married to Michael Swartzendruber and is a member of Wayland (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Naomi Ruder Wenger *MATS.* Naomi will continue to serve as co-director of The Hermitage Community, a contemplative prayer retreat community in Three Rivers, Mich. She and J. David Wenger, her husband, have four children. She is a member of Florence Church of the Brethren Mennonite, Centreville, Mich.

Matthew Curtis Yeater *MDiv.* Matt plans to attend graduate school at Hebrew University of Jerusalem or Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel. He is a member of Life Tabernacle Church in Elkhart and has three children.

NOT PICTURED

JoEllyn Nowak Chadwick *Certificate in Theological Studies.* JoEllyn will continue in her role as director of adult ministries at First United Methodist Church in La Porte, Ind. She is married to Lester Chadwick; they have four children and 10 grandchildren.

Benjamin John Schlegel *MDiv.*

Ben will continue to serve as pastor at Howard-Miami Mennonite Church in Kokomo, Ind. He and Sarah, his wife, have two children. •



Austin Roberts, Karl Stutzman, Laurel Mast Swartzendruber, Matt Yeater and Naomi Wenger. Credit: Steve Echols

Seminary graduates called to live and teach patience

Mary E. Klassen

In his address at the May 21 AMBS commencement service, Alan Kreider, professor emeritus of church history and mission, called 2016 graduates to a life of patience. Scripture texts for the service included Hebrews 12:1-2, which urges Christian to run the race with patience. Of this exhortation, Kreider commented, “What a peculiar way to run a race!”

Kreider recently completed an in-depth study of the early church’s emphasis on and understanding of the virtue of patience, culminating in publication of *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbably Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire* (Baker Academic, 2016). His address gave particular attention to second- and third-century North African theologians Tertullian and Cyprian, and to the example of Jesus. He contrasted their attention to and formation in patience with our culture’s pervasive impatience.

Early Christians were convinced that patience was the very nature of God, Kreider explained. “Patience was not what they were taught but what they were formed to be. I think this was the key to early Christian witness—not what they said but what they were.”



After noting the dangers of impatience in our culture and pointing out how patience was central for early Christians, Kreider said, “God wants those of you who are graduating to be patient Christians, and to minister to other people in such a way that they become patient Christians—Christians whose character and reflexes are patient.”

He encouraged graduates to look to Jesus as shown in the four Gospels, to remember that God is in control and to follow Jesus’ example of praying. “A patient stance for us today is to seek



Graduates Katerina Friesen and Matthew Yeater recite Hebrews 12:1-2. Katerina read in English while Matt read in Greek using braille—one of the tools he relied on in his seminary study because of his vision impairment.



God’s kingdom with our gifts and skills and to pray with passion that God will bring the kingdom.”

Finally he called graduates to help their congregations become schools of patience. Patience needs to be learned, Kreider said, and it is best learned by practicing it with others.”

In the usual AMBS commencement tradition, Scripture texts were read by students prior to the address. Readers from the 2016 class were Katerina Friesen, reading in English, and Matthew Yeater reading in Greek, relying on braille—one of the reading tools he used in his seminary study because of a vision impairment.

Eighteen graduates were honored in the service. Nine earned the Master of Divinity degree, a three-year program of study for leadership in the church. Three earned the Master of Arts: Theological Studies, two the Master of Arts: Peace Studies and one the Master of Arts in Christian Formation. Three people received the Certificate in Theological Studies, representing one year of study.

One-third of the graduates are in pastoral ministry or are seeking pastoral ministry roles. Two are pursuing mission work, one in a U.S. urban setting and one in a European setting. One will pursue graduate studies in Israel, one is entering a chaplaincy program, one is seeking a chaplaincy position, and others have made or are making plans for other forms of ministry.

Jamie Pitts, assistant professor of Anabaptist studies, presented the charge to the graduates. Noting that graduation comes between Pentecost and Trinity Sunday, he gave the graduates a call to three things: to celebrate the “harvest of God’s good gifts,” to renew their commitment to the way of Jesus Christ, and to “rest in the Spirit because the Spirit rests on and in you.” Graduates responded to this charge with silent reflection, and then lit small candles and carried them from the center to the outside walls of the sanctuary.

The commencement service included an announcement that Linda Shelly is the recipient of the 2016 AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition. Shelly



is regional director for Latin America with Mennonite Mission Network. She has worked for decades in and for Latin America for Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite mission boards. In fall, she will have an opportunity to share with the seminary community about her ministry and will receive fuller recognition at that time. •

Photos (left to right): James Branum receives his degree from president Sara Wenger Shenk, with academic dean Rebecca Slough and registrar Scott Janzen; Alan Kreider gives the commencement address; Graduates Austin Roberts and Charlene Mast stand for the conferring of their degrees.

Faculty present graduate awards

Each year, AMBS faculty present awards to selected graduates at the Dean's Breakfast, the day before commencement. This year's recipients are:

- **Katerina Friesen**, Award for Excellence in Peace Studies and Award for Excellence in Missional Leadership
- **Annika Krause**, Heart of the Community Award
- **Charlene Mast**, Award for Excellence in Christian Formation
- **Gabriel Pennington**, Heart of the Community Award
- **Laurel Mast Swartzendruber**, Award for Excellence in Pastoral Care and Counseling
- **Naomi Wenger**, Willard M. Swartley Award for Excellence in Biblical Interpretation
- **Matthew Yeater**, Millard C. Lind Award for Excellence in Biblical Interpretation

All the graduates received a free webinar registration from the Church Leadership Center, a one-year subscription to *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* from the Institute of Mennonite Studies and access to ATLASerials library resources. They also received a 'golden ticket' from the admissions team, good for one waived application fee, to share with someone considering study at AMBS. •



Graduate Naomi Wenger received the Willard M. Swartley Award for Excellence in Biblical Interpretation from Ben C. Ollenburger, professor of biblical theology.

Developing missional leaders



AMBS is announcing the launch of Missional Leadership Development, our newly revised distance education program at the under-graduate or non-credit level.

Missional Leadership Development is for active leaders of congregations, church planters, pastors called to ministry without a college or seminary education, and lay leaders preparing for a variety of ministries in church or community.

The program, which will be administered by David B. Miller, associate professor of mission leadership development, has six units of study and is built on three key elements: online coursework with other students, annual visits to the Elkhart campus or a nearby camp, and biweekly meetings with a pastoral mentor near them. This program grew out of our formerly-offered Pastoral Studies Distance Education program. Registration deadline for fall semester is September 12. Visit ambs.edu/missionalleadershipdevelopment •

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A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

ALUMNI NEWS

The April 2016 issue of *Anabaptist Witness* includes several contributions from alumni, including articles by **Richard Showalter (MDiv 1974)**, **Sarah Thompson (MDiv 2011)**, and **Alain Epp Weaver**, and reviews of books by **John Sharp (MDiv 2005)** and **John K. Stoner (MDiv 1997)**. Read it online at anabaptistwitness.org

Alumni Serving as Church-Wide Leaders: **Ryan Siemens (MDiv 2007)** started serving in 2015 as Area Church Minister for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. **Kathy Neufeld Dunn (MDiv 1991)** began work in July 2016 as Associate Conference Minister

for Western District Conference of MC USA. **Doug Luginbill (MDiv 1997)** will begin serving August 15 as Conference Minister of Central District Conference of MC USA.

In Memoriam: Robert Ramseyer (BD 1954), professor emeritus of missions and anthropology, died April 30 in Bluffton, Ohio, at the age of 86. He taught at AMBS between 1972 and 1996, alternating with terms of missionary service in Japan. Bob is survived by his wife Alice Ruth and four adult children.

Alumni, stay connected at [facebook.com/groups/ambsalumni](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ambsalumni) •



Nurturing the whole Christian learner

Excellent academics are balanced with deep personal and spiritual formation as AMBS develops Christian leaders in body, mind and spirit.



Worship: Students not only participate in worship, they also play an active role in planning chapel services and morning prayers. Worship is enriched by the different styles offered by people from various faith traditions from points all over the globe.



Play: Every fall, new and current students, faculty, staff and their families join in community-building activities at Camp Friedenswald in Cassopolis, Mich. During the year, disciplined study is also interspersed with table tennis, board games, soccer, and frisbee.



Witness: Whether in a Stations of the Cross prayer walk to sites of trauma and healing in Elkhart (above), at a nine-day Trail of Death class pilgrimage retracing the forced removal of the Potawatomi Indians, or paying attention to creation care, AMBS guides today's and tomorrow's leaders in joining God's reconciling mission. ●

Top: Professor Andy Brubacher Kaethler and student Anita Yoder work on building a canoe, which was the group project for the entire Christian Practices in a Technological Culture course. Andrea Baker Dean and Nekeisha Alayna Alexis take part in one of the many special breaks. **Bottom:** Student Sungbin Kim plays guitar in chapel. Students untangle themselves in an activity at Camp Friedenswald. A Stations of the Cross walk, which involved local residents, was coordinated in part by campus pastor Janeen Bertsche Johnson and student Katerina Friesen. **Credits:** Mary E. Klassen, Jason Bryant, Peter Ringenberg and Tyler Klassen.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Every October, between Canadian and US Thanksgiving observances, the seminary community gathers for two special morning breaks to celebrate the generosity of our donors. Our students benefit from named scholarships in honor and memory of saints present and past, and we encourage these students to share their seminary calling with scholarship representatives. In some cases, lifelong friendships have grown out of sending a simple thank-you note.

We also thank those who give generously to the Student Aid and AMBS Funds. We are reminded that if we relied only on tuition income, we would run out of money by the end of October. From November on, we are carried by a cloud of witnesses who love AMBS and believe in our mission. We are grateful that we can continue to serve the church by educating followers of Jesus to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world. ●



Supporting new leaders with hearts on fire



Karl Malotane International Student Scholarship

Karl is the recipient of this full-tuition scholarship that encourages and supports outstanding international students with gifts for ministry as they prepare to serve the church in their home country. Karl joins the AMBS community from Zimbabwe, where he worships with the Assembly of God. He will be pursuing a Master of Arts: Peace Studies degree, with a concentration in international development administration.



Grant Miller Next Generation Scholarship

Grant is the recipient of this full-tuition award that encourages and supports

outstanding Mennonite students with gifts in church leadership. Grant lives in Goshen, Indiana, and is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship. He will be pursuing a Master of Divinity degree, with a concentration in history, theology and ethics.



Rebekah York Church Leadership Award

Rebekah is the recipient of the Church Leadership Award, a full-tuition scholarship that

encourages and supports outstanding Mennonite students with gifts for ministry as they prepare to serve the church. Rebekah is a member of Washington Community Fellowship and currently lives in Alexandria, Va. She will be pursuing a Master of Arts: Peace Studies (MAPS) degree, with a concentration in international development administration. •

ADDITIONAL AWARDS for 2016-17 incoming students

- **Andrew Bodden**
Multicultural Scholarship and Steiner Bivocational Scholarship
- **Meredith Caldwell**
United Methodist Student Scholarship
- **Ian Funk**
Lederach Preaching Scholarship and Steiner Bivocational Scholarship
- **Brian Hendricks**
Steiner Bivocational Scholarship
- **Spencer Husch**
Multicultural Scholarship and Steiner Bivocational Scholarship
- **Josh Janzen**
Special Scholarship
- **Benjamin Krauss**
Multicultural Scholarship
- **Bryan Miller**
Lederach Preaching Scholarship
- **Xinia (Marisa) Smucker**
Multicultural Scholarship
- **Dylan Stillman**
Steiner Bivocational Scholarship and Special Scholarship
- **Janell Warkentin**
Steiner Bivocational Scholarship and Anabaptist Scholarship
- **Jennie Wintermote**
Steiner Bivocational Scholarship

AMBS PANORAMA

Seminary Preview Days

Want to visit campus and explore study options? Please join us November 4 or March 3. ambs.edu/visitAMBS

AMBS-EMS Partnership

AMBS and Eastern Mennonite Seminary have each identified three online courses that students at one school can take from the other school. Cross-listed AMBS courses are History of Christianity in Africa; Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture; and Global Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology and History. Cross-listed EMS courses are Psychology of Religious Experience, Pastoral Care, and Race and Religions in America.

Merry Lea Environmental Center (Goshen College)

AMBS has formed a partnership with Merry Lea Environmental Center, allowing peace studies students to participate in a semester-long residential program in Environmental

Sustainability Leadership. ambs.edu/academics/merry-lea-semester.cfm

Pastors Week

The topic for Pastors Week, January 23–26, 2017, is Cultivating Intercultural Leadership for Diversity-Oriented Churches, featuring A. Brian Leander. Get updates at ambs.edu/pastorsweek

Research for Ministry: Online Seminar

Use our wealth of online library resources to add depth and inspiration to your preaching, worship planning, Bible study, pastoral care and theological reflection. Throughout the term you will study topics of your choice, share and test your learnings with others in the class, and learn from what classmates have discovered. This affordable, non-credit, online course is designed to support your ongoing ministry. ambs.edu/researchforministry

Make 4 Hours Count: How to Streamline Bible Study for Ministry

This six-week, online short course is for pastors, Bible study teachers, and other church leaders who have some education, experience and background in Bible. This course addresses how to fit preparation of a biblical text that one wishes to use in ministry—a sermon, teaching a class, or other use—into a full, real life with its interruptions, short windows of opportunity and many demands. ambs.edu/shortcourses

Webinars

Upcoming webinar topics include Congregational Leadership and Ministry in the Face of Sexual Abuse, Introduction to Anabaptism, Planting Peace Churches, and Changing the Way the Church Views Racism. ambs.edu/webinars •